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REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested for the following reasons:

1. Amendments to Claims

Claims 1 and 9 have been amended to recite the specific validating methods originally recited in claims 4 and 12 and described in paragraph [16] of the original specification, except that the validation is recited as only occurring if the VLAN to be validated is not an existing VLAN. The reason for the change is that paragraph [25] of the original specification states that the invention may also be used to reconfigure an existing VLAN, in which case the steps of receiving the VLAN ID and validating the new VLAN are omitted.

The only other substantive changes to the original claims are to recite the operator to which the GUI is presented, as described for example in paragraph [16], line 4, and to amend claim 9 to recite "a system including at least one device," as described in paragraph [15], lines 5-7.

Finally, new claims 17 and 18 have been added to recite the steps of querying the node for the list of VLANs which are currently configured on the node and storing the list, as described in paragraph [16], lines 8-10 of the original specification.

Because each of the amendments and the new claims is clearly supported by the original specification, it is respectfully submitted that the amendments do not involve "new matter."

2. Rejection of Claims 1-16 Under 35 USC §101

This rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that:

- the method of claims 1-8 and 17 require steps that clearly involve more than just the mere execution of software, such as presenting a GUI to the operator (which is a displaying step), and transmitting the validated VLAN to the node (which requires converting the

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VLAN configuration into a format suitable for transmission and actually transmitting the configuration); and

- claims 9-16 and 18 are directed to a system including a device, which is clearly a statutory category.

The invention is not disembodied software, but rather requires not only display ("presentation") of a GUI, but also a way for the operator to input node and physical port identifiers, a VLAN identifier, and virtual port selections, as well as communications between the management system and the node across which the bridge is being established.

As a result, the invention meets the criteria for patentable subject matter set forth in MPEP 2106, and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC §101 is respectfully requested.

3. Rejection of Claims 1-16 Under 35 USC §102(b) in view of Admitted Prior Art and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0158900 (Hsieh)

This rejection is respectfully traversed on the grounds that the invention, as now claimed, is not merely use of a graphical user interface (GUI) to enter configuration information, but rather a way of validating the input configuration. As now claimed, whenever the operator configures a new VLAN (as opposed to merely re-configuring an already configured existing VLAN), the new VLAN is validated by comparing an input VLAN ID with VLAN IDs in a list of VLANs that are currently configured for the physical port.

As a result of the validation feature, the invention has the advantage of avoiding conflicts and wasted effort on the part of the operator. Furthermore, the use of the GUI allows the operator to select from lists of virtual ports in member sets of the VLAN, making it unlikely that the operator will duplicate the ports between sets (claims 2 and 10). Still further, the invention may be arranged to automatically retrieve the lists of configured VLANs used for validation, without the need for operator intervention, by querying the node as recited in new claims 17 and 18.

